

Town Government Study Committee 2014
Town Hall Juliani Room
December 9, 2014 7:00 pm

Committee: Katherine L Babson Jr., Rose Mary Donahue, Arthur J Goldberg, Ann Marie Gross, Richard Page, Linda Perlmutter, Thomas Ulfelder
Also: Kathleen Nagle

Chair Babson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. She announced that the session was being taped for Broadcast by the Wellesley Channel. She asked if there was anyone present to address the committee.

Babson announced that expected guest Marilyn Contreas was unable to attend this evening.

The minutes of November 5 and 18 were accepted for filing.

Babson invited committee members to offer brief reports on interviews completed.

Ann Marie Gross reported on the Audit Committee.

- This Committee of 5 is appointed by the Moderator and its principal responsibility is to review the recommendations of the independent outside auditor. They present the findings to the Board of Selectmen.
- They are not currently authorized to conduct internal controls audits. There is a suggestion the bylaws should be amended to incorporate this role.
- If a "Finance Committee" is established Audit thinks they should have a seat on that committee.
- Bylaws should also be updated to reflect the way this committee currently operates.

Katherine Babson reported on the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)

- NRC is elected Board established by Special Act to combine numerous statutory functions into one board.
- New Director Brandon Schmitt
- Appoints and supervise Wetlands Protection Committee
- Two advisory committees, Landscape and Long Range Planning are in the bylaws but not currently operating.
- NRC responsibility to prepare an Open Space Plan but this is only in draft form at this time.
- NRC is the only board charged with protection and management of open space property controlled by the town.
- NRC is sometimes in conflict with other boards when a change in use for open space is proposed. They do support the TDRT team concept.
- Suggestions for consideration:

- Amend TBL to reflect current advisory committees/eliminate committees not needed
- Discuss elected vs appointed for this board
- Investigate cross training of employees with other land use departments
- Establish a GIS layer for natural resources issues.

Tom Ulfelder reported on Permanent Building Committee (PBC)

- PBC is appointed by Moderator and is responsible for carrying out major building projects.
- A flaw is that there is no formal procedure for architect to communicate issues with end user.
- There is a School Committee members appointed to PBC for school projects.
- PBC supports the concept of the the establishment of Facilities Maintenance Department with responsibility for maintenance of existing buildings but this has created a blurring of authority. Building process for new facilities needs to take into account end user needs and maintenance issues.
- PBC not favorable to raise project \$ threshold to higher than \$100,000. PPC has authority to agree to allow department to do other jobs on a case by case basis.
- PBC not in favor of project manager or architect as town employee, maintain the ability to sue for liability if issues arise.
- Suggestions:
 - Explore \$ threshold for projects
 - Explore the relationship between project management and maintenance between PBC/FMD

Anna Sereiko arrives.

Anna Sereiko reported on interview with PBC administrator Kathy Mullaney

- Mission of PBC is clear- take a project approved by town meeting through construction to completion.
- Challenge of managing multiple simultaneous projects is recent development
- Challenge of clear communications with FMD

Rosemary Donahue summarized work done on Saturday Dec 6 meeting of Committee.

Three main areas for emphasis

Executive Authority including centralization and strategic planning

Land use departments - permitting process coordination
Coordination of authority and parameters for PBC and FMD project management

Babson suggested the committee form subcommittees for communication with other stakeholder boards and subject matter working groups.

1. Executive Authority
2. Strategic Planning and Setting town wide priorities
3. Land use issues
4. Technical drafting of bylaws/special acts to achieve recommended actions (collaborate with town counsel)
5. PBC/FMD authority
6. Suggestions related to Town Meeting
7. Other bucket list items not related to the above topics.

Babson suggested the committee consider hiring a consultant to assist with the recommendations phase of the project. She has interviewed Peter Hechenbleikner, retired Reading Town manager regarding his availability to consult. He will meet with the TGSC on December 17.

(Notes taken by Linda Perlmutter)

Discussion followed on developing a budget and scope of work necessary for these consulting services. In addition, the committee was reminded that there had been discussion about surveying Town residents. Given that TGSC has a budget of \$15,000 certain members wanted assurance there was sufficient monies available to undertake remaining business.

With regard to surveying residents, TGSC discussed using email and asking the Townsman to interview Gig to recruit citizen input. In addition citizens will have an opportunity to meet with the TGSC on January 22 and 23, 2015

TGSC was reminded that Needham conducts biennial surveys of its citizens. The resulting information guides the governing process based on a set of core values developed from the survey responses. There was agreement that good government benefits from citizen input.

Gig then reviewed the Town interview assignments. She also reviewed availability for future meetings and underscored keeping the TGSC on track so we may meet our reporting obligations to TM.

Gig will reschedule Marilyn Contreras for sometime in January 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18.

Submitted by Kathy Nagle with assistance of Linda Perlmutter.